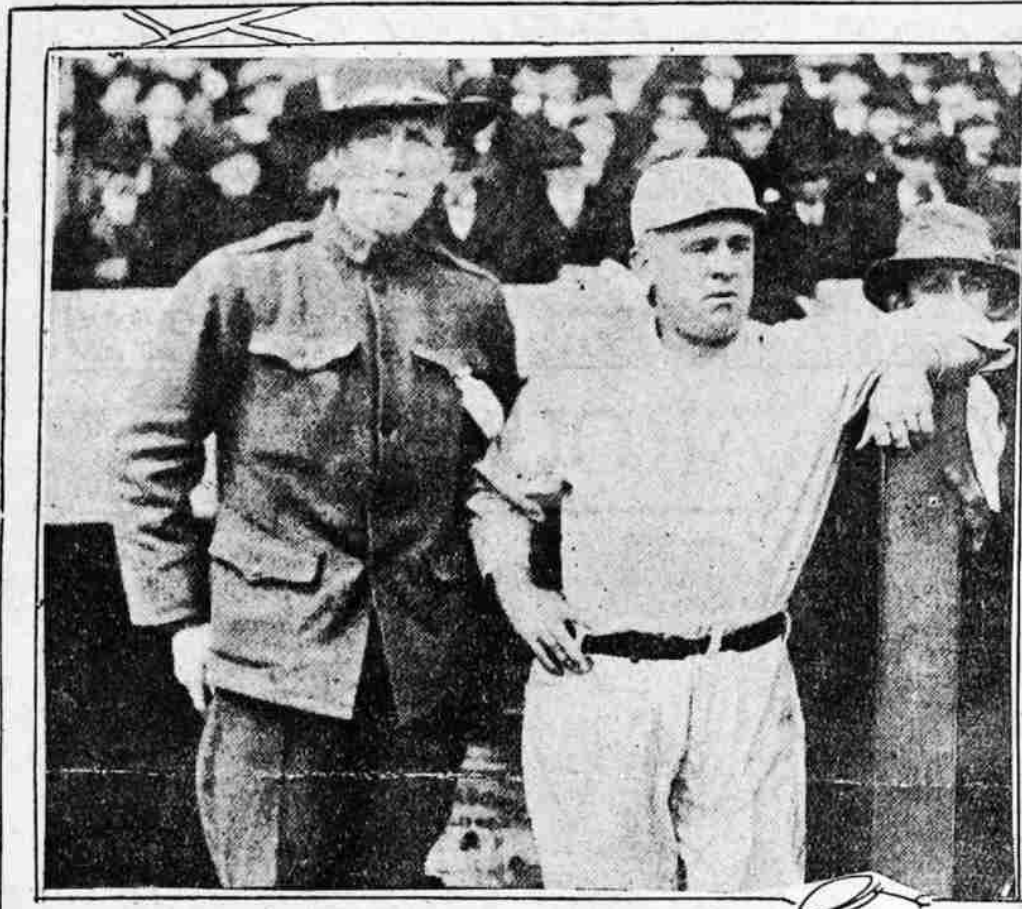


Big Players Have Saved Baseball from Slackerdom



SERGEANT "HANK" GOWDY AND JOHN MCGRAW

BY J. B. SHERIDAN.

EDDIE GRANT who was a famous third baseman at Harvard before he joined the old Philadelphia club, was the first baseball player of major league capacity to lay down his life in action. Grant was a captain of infantry and fell in the attacks to relieve the famous "lost battalion" during the advance in the Argonne Forest. The "lost battalion," as all the world knows, was cut from out of the rest of the American forces and surrounded by Germans. It was there and then that the American major commanding the battalion gave his famous reply, "Go to hell," to the Germans demand for surrender.

Grant was among the officers who were leading the attacks to relieve the surrounded battalion. Doing so, he fell, the first baseball player of fame to give his life to the cause.

Eddie Grant was a very good baseball player and a charming young man. He first gained distinction on the diamond while he was a student at Harvard, where he played third base on the college team. Grant was one of the few college men who went directly from school to the major leagues and made good right off the bat, without being sent to a minor league for training, kept on the bench or anything like that. Even the great Eddie Collins had to have three years' seasoning with the Athletics before he made good.

Was Too Gentlemanly.

Grant made good from the start at third base and with the bat. He batted well over .300 right along and his fielding was very good. Grant really was a much better player than he was credited with being. He was too quiet, too gentlemanly, lacking too much in aggressiveness, to be very famous. He just batted well and played a good third base. He really was a very nice chap. For one or another reason his best form did not endure very long. Bobby Byrne was secured from Pittsburgh to succeed Grant about 1915.

Byrne at that time was past his prime. Still, the baseball world considered Eddie Grant quite good enough to hold a major league job. No less a personage than John J. McGraw engaged him to act as substitute infielder for the Giants.

The young Harvard man—Grant was no. 30 when he was killed—was one of the first baseball players to answer the call of his country. He joined the first officers' camp called in 1917, just after the United States declared war, and was commissioned a captain. That he did his duty bravely and quietly as he played baseball, every soldier who knew him bears testimony. Eddie Grant was a gentle, brave, young American. Baseball has very great reason to be proud of him.

Next to Grant, Hugh Miller, who played with the St. Louis Cardinals and was at one or another time a member of Three-I and Pacific Coast League teams and who belonged to the Philadelphia Nationals, is the baseball player who has most distinguished himself in the service of the United States.

Miller was severely wounded and given the Distinguished Service medal for conspicuous bravery in action at Belleau Wood. He had been sick in hospital when he heard that his regiment of marines was due to go over the top. He broke out of the hospital, joined his company and went with it. The special brave act which won him the D. S. M. was taking a machine gun and killing two German gunners and taking two others single-handed.

Wounded a Second Time.

The gun had been bothering his regiment very much. Miller spied it out, crawled up on it and killed a couple of the gun crew and taking two others prisoners packed the gun on his shoulders and drove the prisoners into the American lines. Miller was slightly wounded in this action. Later he returned to duty and has been reported as seriously wounded. The extent of his latest injuries is not known.

It is an accepted yet peculiar thing that the quietest men are usually the bravest. Like Grant, Miller is a very quiet player. Indeed, it was held against him that he always kept his head down, never said a word and while he played good ball, he also played "dead" ball. His friends are wont to hold that Miller would have been a very successful player had he shown any "life." The same was true of Eddie Grant. Yet when opposed by the Boche and death they were the bravest of the brave.

Neither man waited to be drafted, but

joined the colors so soon as war was declared. Grant even left a recently married wife to do his bit for his country.

Since Percy Haughton, president of the Boston National League club, joined the Gas and Flame Corps as a major there has been a legion of ball-players into that branch of the service. Haughton got Branch Rickey into the Gas and Flame Corps as a major. Rickey got Ty Cobb in as a captain and George Sisler as a second lieutenant. Former President Tener of the National League, who is also former congressman and former governor of Pennsylvania, got Christy Mathewson into the Gas and Flame Corps as a captain.

Percy Haughton, who is more famous as a football coach than as a baseball man, was moved by a desire to do something real in the war. Haughton is a partner in a brokerage firm in Boston, well to do, and can afford to give his services gratis if he feels like it. Being a 31-year man at Washington did not appeal to him. So he hooked on where he could get action quicker than in any other way, the Gas and Flame Corps.

Haughton always has had a fancy for that other baseball collegian, Branch Rickey. He dragged the St. Louis president into the gas and flame department with him. Gen. Sibert wanted a good subject to get the corps some advertising. Rickey, who is the father of free advertisement-getting, put Gen. Sibert on to Tyrus Raymond Cobb. Of course, Gen. Sibert's idea was to get as many good men as possible to join the corps where such fellows as Cobb were officers. Rickey also got George Sisler into the corps as a lieutenant. Sisler, by the way, has come in for some unkind criticism because, it was said, he refused a lieutenant's commission and took, instead, a job playing ball with a steel mill club. This Sisler, who is in Detroit, indignantly denies. He says he has accepted a commission as second lieutenant on the Gas and Flame Corps and is awaiting orders.

Cobb Anxious for Fray.

Cobb is congratulating himself that his detail will put him in action very soon. Cobb says that, while many other men are employed in the defense department of the Gas and Flame Corps, his assignment will send him into the field to feed the flames and gas to the Germans.

Cobb's marvelous playing was largely responsible for the tremendous boom that took place in baseball from 1905 to 1912, and even thereafter. He not only attracted thousands of spectators to the games in which he played, but he also "speeded up" baseball, forced other players to strike a faster pace; in all, advanced the speed of the game 50 per cent. When professional baseball was declared nonessential employment, many star players rushed to the safe places offered by shipyards, munition plants, farms, etc.

Not so Cobb. For thirteen years he had led the attack in baseball. His proper position was with the aggressive forces, "shock troops," in the field. That is the place he chose. Cobb never has been personally popular with baseball players. He too often made them feel their great inferiority. It has been truly said that he was in a class by himself. He was. But there are few baseball players who will deny Cobb the great things he has done for baseball and for the men who play it.

Cobb to Rescue.

At a time when it seemed that the craven action of lesser men would bring professional baseball into disrepute, Cobb "came to the bat" and saved the reputation of the game and of its players. All of which is as it should be. If baseball could not look to its favorite son for assistance, to whom could it look?

With all the row and racket about the

2ND. LIEUTENANT, GEO. SISLER, GAS AND FLAME CORPS.



MAJOR PERCY HAUGHTON, GAS AND FLAME CORPS

slackers—and it was justified—many of the stars are doing the right thing by themselves, by baseball and by their country. Alexander, the great pitcher, for the reversion of whose contract Chicago paid \$50,000 to Philadelphia one year ago, has been in France for some months. Alexander, one of the greatest pitchers of all time, is a sergeant in an infantry regiment. Killifer, his catcher, will soon join him in France.

Epps Jephtha Rickey, who was one of Alexander's pitching mates on the Philadelphia team, is winning honors as an aviator. Cliff Markle, the old Yankee pitcher, has done his bit, been wounded, recovered and gone back for another crack at the Hun. Marvin Goodwin, who created a sensation with Milwaukee in 1917, and who was sold to the St. Louis Nationals in the same year, was one of the first players to volunteer. Goodwin quit in midseason of his first major league year, gave up baseball fame and a large salary, to do what he thought was the right thing—serve his country in the air. A plain, young fellow of the farming class, a "red neck," or "apple knocker," Goodwin has a splendid, clear mind, and is a true American.

Evers Couldn't Make Grade.

Pretty well "shot up" by nerves and neurosis, Johnnie Evers, hero of five world's series and winner on three, could not make the grade for the army. So he got himself a job as a camp secretary of the Knights of Columbus. Evers has been putting "pep" in the vacations of the American soldiers in France. A nice little chap, Johnnie is as full of fight as a basketful of cats. He is organizing baseball clubs among the soldiers, American, French and British, in France and talking fight all the time.

Among other things he organized a crack team of major leaguers from the soldiers. Hank Gowdy, his pal and teammate on the Boston champions of 1914, is his catcher. Alexander is his pitcher, etc. Evers has been taking this team about the line in France, meeting divisional clubs and playing in

the large cantonments and cities where there are good opposition teams. Thus does the Trojan do his bit by helping to while away tedium for the American and other soldiery.

It has been said, too, that Evers proposes to teach the French soldiers to play baseball. It is not impossible that he may succeed. While baseball is just learned by boys between the ages of 8 and 12 it may be imparted to young men. The depots of the French Army are filled with 18-year-old recruits. They may learn how to play baseball.

The game had its spread in America through being played by the troops engaged in the civil war. Baseball was played by very little outside of New York and New England prior to 1861. The late Nicholas E. Young, former secretary of the National League, writes that baseball was unknown in his native city, Amsterdam, N. Y., before the war. Cricket was the game then. Young saw his first baseball game while serving in the army near Petersburg, Va. It was played by the Twenty-seventh New York Regiment.

The New Englanders and New Yorkers took the game into the field with them. Troops from other parts of the United States saw the new sport and turned to their homes in various parts of the country they took baseball with them.

So, it may be in France. The French may learn it, though, save the Bretons and Basques, who have been the original ball people, the French have not shown any great aptitude for baseball. The Lajoles, Dubuc, La Chances and other great players with French names are probably of Breton or Basque antecedents. The St. Lawrence was navigated, settled and held by Basque and Breton navigators. The habitants of Quebec are mostly of Basque or Breton extraction. They are Celts, or Celto-Iberians, akin to the Irish, the Scotch and the Welsh. The Celts were the original ball play-



JOHN EVERS, KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS WAR SERVICE



CAPT. MATHEWSON, GAS AND FLAME CORPS



EDDIE GRANT IN ACTION



EDDIE GRANT, FIRST BALL-PLAYER KILLED

adhere to the things they know. The Basques are successful in commerce and in letters, but the Bretons are medieval.

The French-Canadians are the most backward people on the North American Continent. They still use wooden plows, though living among the most advanced and progressive people in the world. Their customs are those of the middle ages. They are fine, strong folk, love their homes, have large families and abominate change. Not a hopeful people for propaganda.

The French temperament is better suited to baseball than that of the British, but I look for Evers to attain his greatest success among the Australians and New Zealanders. These are new peoples, and inclined to adopt new things. They have work to do and no time for cricket, which requires a week to play.

Mathewson's trip to France meant more to him than the overseas journey means to most men who have made it. "Matty" abominates the sea. That is why he quit the New York team at San Francisco when it made the trip around the world some years ago. He dreaded the ocean wave. But after refusing the post of a Y. M. C. A. athletic director in France, "Matty" found his stock had gone down with the American people. He was bound to reinstate himself in their good graces. So, one of the quietest men in the world, by no means a natural soldier such as Cobb is, or as Evers would be if physically fit, Matty finds himself in the most deadly department of warfare, a service so terrible that only its awful adoption by the Germans led civilized powers to countenance its employment. The use of gas and flame is so terrible that they are used only against their originators, the Germans.

Branch Rickey, former catcher and manager of the St. Louis Browns and later president of the St. Louis Nationals, is also in France. Rickey went with Percy Haughton. He is a Y. M. C. A. man from the heart out, but a majority in gas and flame offered him larger opportunities than a Y. M. C. A. secretaryship or physical directorship could offer. Those who know Rickey say that he could do more good for his country by being sent to talk the Germans to death, to smother them in the flights of oratory. Rickey is a prodigious and powerful talker.

Jack Hendricks, who managed the Cardinals for Rickey last year, is a Knights of Columbus secretary, and expects to go to France very soon. Hugh Jennings, who has managed Detroit for many years, is also in the field service of the K. of C., and also expects to be on his way to Flanders fields in the near future.

So, even if a large number of plumed and chicken-hearted players have hied to the bombproofs of shipyard and steel mill, three major-league presidents, Huston, Haughton and Rickey, several managers and not less than a dozen star players, as well as innumerable lesser lights, are doing the right thing. So the base of baseball in war is not so bad as it might be.

Anglo-Saxon Sporting Blood.

It is worthy of remark that the Teutonic races have not originated any ball game. It may also be worthy of remark that Marshals Joffre and Foch, the great generals of the great war, are both Basques. Gen. Haig, the British leader, is Scotch from another branch of the great Gaelic or Celtic family. Gen. Pershing, of Alsatian descent, probably has a Celtic strain in him. Thus we find the great myth of Anglo-Saxon superiority largely dispelled.

The fact is that there is hardly any such thing as an Anglo-Saxon race. The British claim Anglo-Saxon blood. There is no doubt that the blood of the Anglos and Saxons does flow in British veins, but these Germanic tribes found England peopled with Celts. That the sea rovers intermarried with the latter is also undoubtedly true. Thus British blood is largely Celtic. The Anglo-Saxon has not ruled in England since the battle of Hastings, 1066. Norman blood has since that time ruled the land that ruled the wave. The great patrician families of England have been Norman. So much for the Anglo-Saxon myth and the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race in sports or in anything else. Whatever he may be in anything else, the Celt is supreme in the world of athletics.

So it may be that Evers will succeed in his effort to teach baseball to the French. The Basque and the Breton, very strong people, may follow their blood relations, the Irish, into the game. Yet the Basques and the Bretons are very slow to take up modern things. They, like all Celts, live in the past.

The Basques and their kin, the Bretons, claim to be the oldest people in Europe. The Celts were in possession of the Atlantic Coast at the dawn of history, but historians say the Iberians preceded the Celts. The Basques